

We claim:

1. A method for storing electronic image file data, comprising:  
generating images with an imaging device having wireless communication capability,  
each image being stored as an image file;  
assigning metadata to each image file contemporaneously with generation of each  
image, the metadata categorizing each image according to at least two schemes;  
wirelessly transmitting the image files and assigned metadata from the imaging device  
for storage on a second device such that the image files may subsequently be searched based  
upon the metadata.
2. The method of claim 1, wherein wirelessly transmitting the image files and assigned  
metadata comprises transmitting the image files and assigned metadata via a short range  
wireless connection.
3. The method of claim 1, wherein:  
the imaging device is a wireless mobile device,  
the second device is remotely located from the imaging device, and  
wirelessly transmitting the image files and assigned metadata comprises  
transmitting the image files and assigned metadata via a wireless communication network.
4. The method of claim 1, wherein at least one of the schemes is date of image creation.

5. The method of claim 1, wherein at least one of the schemes is one or more subjects shown in an image.
6. The method of claim 1, wherein at least one of the schemes is location where an image is created.
7. The method of claim 1, wherein one of the schemes is date of image creation and another of the schemes is multiple subjects shown in an image.
8. The method of claim 7, wherein another of the schemes is location where an image is created.
9. The method of claim 7, further comprising:  
receiving a designation of at least one image as personal and at least one image as shared, wherein the image file for the at least one personal image is only accessible with a password and the image file for the at least one shared image is accessible without the password.
10. The method of claim 1, wherein at least one of the schemes is one or more subjects shown in an image, and wherein the assigning metadata step further comprises receiving a response to a prompt from the imaging device to accept or modify a suggested subject for an image.

11. The method of claim 10, wherein the imaging device is a wireless mobile device capable of executing multiple application programs, and wherein the wireless mobile device generates the prompt based upon data in another application program being executed by the device.

12. The method of claim 11, wherein the other application program is a calendar program.

13. The method of claim 1, wherein at least one of the schemes is location where an image is created, wherein the imaging device is a wireless mobile device operating in a wireless communication network, and wherein the assigning metadata step further comprises assigning location information based upon data provided by a base station for the wireless network.

14. A server for storing image data, comprising:

a memory;

a communications interface coupled to a wireless communication network; and

a processor configured to perform steps comprising:

storing, in the memory, images transmitted through the wireless communication network to the server, each image having associated metadata categorizing said image according to at least two schemes, wherein

said at least two schemes include at least one of an image date, an image location and one or more image subjects, and

the images are stored in a database at the memory, the database including at least one virtual folder corresponding to each of the at least two metadata schemes.

15. The server of claim 14, wherein at least one of the schemes comprises image date, and wherein the processor is further configured to perform steps comprising:

providing a user interface to select at least one date component comprising a year, a month or a day, and

displaying information regarding images corresponding to the selected date component.

16. The server of claim 15, wherein information regarding images comprises thumbnail images of the images.

17. The server of claim 15, wherein the processor is further configured to perform steps comprising:

providing a user interface to select a year, and

displaying, as part of the user interface to select a year, an indication of the years for which there are stored images having metadata corresponding to an indicated year.

18. The server of claim 17, wherein the processor is further configured to perform steps comprising:

displaying, upon selection of a year, an indication of the months of the selected year for which there are stored images having metadata corresponding to an indicated month.

19. The server of claim 18, wherein the processor is further configured to perform steps comprising:

displaying, upon selection of a month, an indication of the days of the selected month for which there are stored images having metadata corresponding to an indicated day.

20. The server of claim 19, wherein the processor is further configured to perform steps comprising:

displaying, upon selection of an indicated day, information regarding images having metadata corresponding to the selected day.

21. The server of claim 15, wherein the processor is further configured to perform steps comprising:

providing a user interface simultaneously displaying years, months and days for sequential user selection,

displaying an indication of years for which there are stored images having metadata corresponding to an indicated year,

displaying an indication of months for which there are stored images having metadata corresponding to an indicated month, and

displaying an indication of days for which there are stored images having metadata corresponding to an indicated day.

22. The server of claim 21, wherein displaying images corresponding to the selected date comprises:

designating, upon selection of a year or month prior to selection of a day, a day of the selected year or month in which there are available images, and

displaying, prior to selection of a day, information regarding images having metadata corresponding to the designated day.

23. The server of claim 22, wherein designating a day comprises randomly choosing a day of the selected year or month in which there are available images.

24. The server of claim 22, wherein designating a day comprises choosing the first day in a numerically ordered series of days in which there are available images.

25. The server of claim 14, wherein one of the schemes comprises image location, and wherein the processor is further configured to perform steps comprising:

providing a user interface to select a subregion of a displayed region, and

displaying, upon selection of a subregion, information regarding images having metadata corresponding to the selected subregion.

26. The server of claim 25, wherein the processor is further configured to perform the step of displaying, as part of the user interface to select a subregion, an indication of the subregions for which there are stored images having metadata corresponding to an indicated subregion.

27. The server of claim 25, wherein the processor is further configured to perform steps comprising:

providing a user interface to select a sub-subregion of the selected subregion, the interface comprising an indication of the sub-subregions for which there are stored images having metadata corresponding to an indicated sub-subregion.

28. The server of claim 14, wherein the processor is configured to perform steps comprising:

grouping, upon designation of stored images by a user, the designated images into a user-defined image folder, and

grouping, upon designation of one or more image folders by a user, the designated folders into a higher level folder.

29. The server of claim 14, wherein at least one of the two schemes comprises multiple subcategories, and wherein each image is indexed by each applicable subcategory.

30. The server of claim 29, wherein the at least one scheme comprises image date, and wherein the subcategories comprise year of image creation and month of image creation.

31. The server of claim 29, wherein the at least one scheme comprises one or more image subjects, and wherein the subcategories comprises individual subjects of at least one multisubject image.

32. The server of claim 29, wherein the at least one scheme comprises image location, and wherein the subcategories comprise a region and a subregion.

33. The server of claim 14, wherein the processor is configured to perform the step of identifying, after selection of an image by a user, other images having metadata in common with the selected image, wherein the common metadata is metadata other than the metadata utilized to initially search for the selected image.

34. The server of claim 14, wherein the processor is configured to perform steps comprising:

displaying information about images in a first image group,

receiving a selection of a first image from the first group,

displaying information about additional image groups of which the first image is also a member,

displaying, upon selection from the additional image groups of a second image group, information about images in the second image group.

35. The server of claim 34, wherein:



one of the schemes is one or more image subjects,  
the first image has associated metadata categorizing the image according to multiple subjects of the image,  
the first image group comprises other images having metadata corresponding to one of the multiple subjects, and  
the second image group comprises images having metadata corresponding to another of the multiple subjects.

36. The server of claim 14, wherein one of the schemes comprises image date and one of the schemes comprises one or more image subjects, and wherein the processor is further configured to perform steps comprising:

providing a user interface to select at least one date component comprising a year, a month or a day,

displaying information regarding images in a date-based group, each image in the date-based group having metadata corresponding to the selected date component,

receiving a selection of an image in the date-based group,

displaying information about first and second subject-based groups, the first subject-based group containing images having metadata corresponding to a first subject of the selected image, and the second subject-based group containing images having metadata corresponding to a second subject of the selected image,

receiving a selection of the first subject-based group, and

displaying information regarding images in the first subject-based group.

37. The server of claim 14, wherein the processor is configured to perform the step of storing images for multiple users, wherein the images are organized by user.

38. A wireless mobile device, comprising:

a camera;

a user interface;

a communication interface with a wireless communication network; and

a processor configured to perform steps comprising:

generating image files for images created with the camera,

assigning metadata to each image file contemporaneously with generation of each image, the metadata categorizing each image according to at least two schemes, and

transmitting the image files and assigned metadata, via the wireless communication network, for storage at a remote location such that the image files may subsequently be searched based upon the metadata.

39. The wireless mobile device of claim 38, wherein at least one of the schemes is date of image creation.

40. The wireless mobile device of claim 38, wherein at least one of the schemes is one or more subjects shown in an image.

41. The wireless mobile device of claim 38, wherein at least one of the schemes is location where an image is created.

42. The wireless mobile device of claim 38, wherein one of the schemes is date of image creation and another of the schemes is multiple subjects shown in an image.

43. The wireless mobile device of claim 42, wherein another of the schemes is location where an image is created.

44. The wireless mobile device of claim 38, wherein at least one of the schemes is one or more subjects shown in an image, and wherein the processor is configured to perform the step of prompting a user to accept or modify a suggested subject for an image.

45. The wireless mobile device of claim 44, wherein the processor is configured to perform the step of generating the prompt based upon data in another application program being executed by the processor.

46. The wireless mobile device of claim 45, wherein the other application program is a calendar program.

47. The wireless mobile device of claim 38, wherein at least one of the schemes is location where an image is created, and wherein the assigning metadata step further comprises assigning location information based upon data provided by a base station of the wireless communication network.

48. A machine-readable medium having machine-executable instructions for performing steps comprising:

storing images transmitted through a wireless communication network to a server, each image having associated metadata categorizing said image according to at least two schemes, wherein

said at least two schemes include at least one of image date, an image location and one or more image subjects, and

the images are stored in a database having at least one virtual folder corresponding to each of the at least two metadata schemes.

49. The machine-readable medium of claim 48, wherein one of the schemes comprises image date, and comprising additional instructions for performing steps comprising:

providing a user interface to select at least one date component comprising a year, a month or a day, and

displaying information regarding images corresponding to the selected date component.

50. The machine-readable medium of claim 49, comprising additional instructions for performing steps comprising:

providing a user interface simultaneously displaying years, months and days for sequential user selection,

displaying an indication of years for which there are stored images having metadata corresponding to an indicated year,

displaying an indication of months for which there are stored images having metadata corresponding to an indicated month, and

displaying an indication of days for which there are stored images having metadata corresponding to an indicated day.

51. The machine-readable medium of claim 48, wherein one of the schemes comprises image location, and comprising additional instructions for performing steps comprising:

providing a user interface to select a subregion of a displayed region, and

displaying, upon selection of a subregion, information regarding images having metadata corresponding to the selected subregion.

52. The machine-readable medium of claim 48, wherein one of the schemes comprises image date and one of the schemes comprises one or more image subjects, and comprising additional instructions for performing steps comprising:

providing a user interface to select at least one date component comprising a year, a month or a day,

displaying information regarding images in a date-based group, each image in the date-based group having metadata corresponding to the selected date component,

receiving a selection of an image in the date-based group,

displaying information about first and second subject-based groups, the first subject-based group containing images having metadata corresponding to a first subject of the selected image, and the second subject-based group containing images having metadata corresponding to a second subject of the selected image,

receiving a selection of the first subject-based group, and  
displaying information regarding images in the first subject-based group.

53. A system for storing images, comprising:

a wireless mobile device, including:

a digital camera,

a user interface,

a communication interface with a wireless communication network, and

a processor configured to perform steps comprising:

generating image files for images created with the digital camera,

generating a prompt for a user to accept or modify a suggested subject

for an image based upon data in another application program being executed by the processor,

obtaining location data from a base station for the wireless network,

assigning metadata to each image file contemporaneously with generation of each image, the metadata categorizing each image according to a first scheme comprising date of image creation, according to a second scheme comprising multiple subjects shown in an image, and according to a third scheme comprising location of image creation, and

transmitting the image files and assigned metadata, via the wireless communication network, for storage at a remote location such that the image files may subsequently be searched based upon the metadata; and

a server for storing image data, comprising:

a memory,

a communications interface coupled to the wireless communication network,

and

a processor configured to perform steps comprising:

storing images generated by the wireless mobile device and transmitted through the wireless communication network to the server, said storing comprising storing the images in a database in the memory, the database having at least one virtual folder corresponding to each metadata scheme, and wherein each image has at least one entry in each of the at least one folders,

providing a user interface to select a year,

displaying, as part of the user interface to select a year, an indication of the years for which there are stored images having metadata indicating creation of an image in an indicated year,

providing a user interface to select a month of the selected year,

displaying, as part of the user interface to select a month, an indication of the months for which there are stored images having metadata indicating creation of an image in an indicated month,

providing a user interface to select a day of the selected month,

displaying, as part of the user interface to select a day, an indication of the days for which there are stored images having metadata indicating creation of an image on an indicated day,

displaying, upon selection of a day, information regarding images created on the selected day,

providing a user interface to select a subregion of a displayed region,  
displaying, as part of the user interface to select a subregion, an indication of the subregions for which there are stored images having metadata indicating creation of an image in an indicated subregion,  
displaying, upon selection of a subregion, information regarding images created in the selected subregion, and  
identifying, after selection of an image by a user, other images having metadata in common with the selected image, wherein the common metadata is metadata other than the metadata utilized to initially search for the selected image.